



LONG BEACH AIRPORT

HISTORICAL FACTS



During the early 1920s, the only "airport" in Long Beach was the city's huge, crescent-shaped beach. Landings and takeoffs were best made at low tides, and it was common to see fabric-covered biplanes flying off the sand amidst ocean spray.

In 1923, the Long Beach City Council set aside 150 acres near the intersection of Spring and Cherry Streets for use as an airfield. Named Daugherty Field (after Earl S. Daugherty, one of the area's pioneer aviators), the new airport enabled Long Beach to gain access to the nation's infant air transportation system.

The first airport operator's lease was issued on April 7, 1925. Significant development began when the city built hangars and administrative facilities for the Army and Navy in 1928-30. During the mid-1930s two runways were constructed, and in 1936 the Civil Aeronautics Authority (now the Federal Aviation Administration) formally activated a control tower.

By 1941, Daugherty Field had increased to 500 acres. That same year the Airport's art deco style terminal building was completed. Architects W. Horace Austin and Kenneth S. Wing, Sr. designed the building. Three federally funded mosaic masterworks created by Grace Clements under the Works Progress Administration/Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP) served as the finishing touches on the building.

As smaller capacity aircraft such as the DC-3 and Constellation were phased out of service in favor of large jets such as the Boeing 737 and Douglas DC-9, the Long Beach terminal needed to grow. In 1984, a new concourse area and pre-boarding lounge were constructed immediately south of the existing terminal building. This improvement project, while retaining the 1940s character of the terminal, provided better accessibility for patrons with disabilities, improved mobility in the passenger screening process, and improved ticketing and check-in processing of airport users. Since the distinguishing architectural characteristics of the terminal were not altered, the building was named a City of Long Beach Cultural Heritage Landmark in 1990.



In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Terminal Building in 1991, the Long Beach Airport Historical Aviation Exhibit was dedicated, displaying relics and photos from the early aviation years. Exhibits such as Daugherty's trophies and awards are featured on the second floor of the terminal. Photos of members of the Long Beach Squadron of the Women's Air Corps Service Pilots (WASP) are also displayed.

Over the years, the Long Beach Airport (LGB), a facility steeped in aviation history, has played a major role in the development of the City. It was the airport, along with an abundant amount of

vacant adjacent land, which first attracted the attention of Donald Wills Douglas in 1940. Today, The Boeing Company provides jobs for more than 14,000 workers, making it the city's largest employer. The Long Beach plant serves as the final production and assembly center for the 717 twinjet, the world's best 100-seat commercial aircraft, and the C-17, the world's most versatile airlifter. The Boeing Realty Corporation is developing the new PacifiCenter on 230 acres of property formerly used to assemble airplanes no longer in production. PacifiCenter will be a business park attracting new technology companies and a minimum of 10,000 new jobs to Long Beach.

The airport is well situated halfway between the major business and tourism areas of both Orange and Los Angeles Counties. Currently, there are over 200 businesses located on airport property, including nearly 100 acres of mid-rise business park and hotel uses, several top-rate fixed base operators, and specialty aviation service companies, as well as Cessna Citation and Gulfstream Aerospace aircraft service centers.

Presently, Long Beach Airport covers 1,166 acres and has five runways, the longest being 10,000 feet. It is a hub of corporate activity as well as being one of the world's busiest airports in terms of general aviation activity. Scheduled airlines also provide passenger and cargo service.

Owned and operated by the City of Long Beach, the Airport is an important part of the Long Beach community. The Airport is proud to be the partner of two Long Beach Unified Schools, Burcham Elementary and Burroughs Elementary. The Airport's volunteer tour program offers an invaluable learning experience. Each year, these tours give over 3,000 children and 500 adults the opportunity to explore a major aviation transportation, manufacturing, and business center, which contributes significantly to the local economy.

As we head into the next century, LGB will continue to power the region's economy and provide safe and efficient aircraft facilities and services. Still a testament to the visions and dreams of a not-too-distant yesteryear, the Long Beach Airport continues to constantly change in a never-ending effort to meet the growing demands of the future.